



NOVEMBER 2001

GRAY DAVIS, GOVERNOR  
 MARIA CONTRERAS-SWEET, SECRETARY OF BUSINESS, TRANSPORTATION AND HOUSING AGENCY  
 JEFF MORALES, DIRECTOR  
 ROBERT W. SASSAMAN, DISTRICT 7 DIRECTOR



Inside Seven - a District 7 Edition of the CT News

## A PROJECT DELIVERY CELEBRATION!

### *Event Celebrates District 7's Statewide Lead in Project Delivery*

By Jeanne Bonfilio

"Well done, District 7! Extremely well done!" Those were the enthusiastic opening comments made by Brent Felker, Headquarters' Deputy Director of Project Delivery at the October 4 Project Delivery Celebration. The celebration was held before a packed audience at the Ronald Reagan State Office Building. And there was much to celebrate! For the first time ever, District 7 is the statewide leader in project delivery. And taking into consideration the complexity and size of the programs in District 7, it is an accomplishment to be proud of!

Joining Felker was Jeff Morales, Caltrans Director, who traveled from Sacramento to join the ceremony. At the podium, Morales praised the efforts of District 7. "This is very dramatic proof of transportation improvement accomplishments," he said. "This is a huge district with incredible demands and you have made these accomplishments during a time of new challenges and changes in working conditions, yet you have not lost sight of the goals and have kept your focus. You have shown all you can do it. No matter what the circumstances, District 7 delivered the projects and kept the team spirit alive."

All project delivery teams have excelled tremendously over the last fiscal year. According to Felker, District 7 has come to terms with how project delivery is measured. "We are seeing a more disciplined approach to how we do business," he said. "Caltrans is working as a team as never before, internally division to division and externally with our trans-



*Celebrating District 7's statewide lead in project delivery at the Ronald Reagan State Office Building are, left to right: Jeff Morales, Raja Mitwasi, Brent Felker and Robert W. Sassaman.*

portation partners. We are here to serve the public and to deliver transportation projects that serve the public's needs."

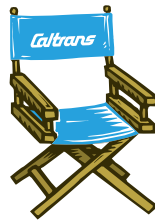
Some of the most substantial improvements have been made in the environmental document area, achieving over 90% project delivery for a 60% improvement over the 30% seen last fiscal year. The statewide average is 65%.

Robert W. Sassaman, District Director, said he is extremely pleased with the efforts put forth by everyone involved in project delivery in order to shine in District 7. "Each job is as important as the next," he said. "We have never been the top District before and for a District of this size, this is one super accomplishment!"

Sassaman also wished to express his appreciation to Raja Mitwasi, Deputy District Director for Program and Project Management and his great staff, for taking project delivery to a higher level. Mitwasi credits the recent successes of his division to communication and teamwork. "I would like to thank all the project managers and functional managers for continuing to keep the lines of communication open and teamwork a top priority," said Mitwasi. "This is the true test of project delivery. And we will continue to meet and exceed our goals."

Echoing the sentiments of Sassaman and Mitwasi, Morales said that he looks

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## THE DIRECTOR'S CHAIR

We proudly celebrated District 7's standing as the statewide leader in project delivery for the past fiscal year at the Project Delivery Celebration October 4. Joining us at the Ronald Reagan State Office Building were Caltrans Director Jeff Morales and Headquarters Deputy Director of Project Delivery Brent Felker. I really appreciate and thank them both for taking time from their busy schedules to join us in our celebration and for sharing their thoughts on the importance of project delivery.

Not only does District 7 have the highest percentage of combined project delivery, but we are also a leader in different categories that project delivery is tracked. The main purpose of the celebration was for Project Management to thank the functional units who were instrumental in making District 7 number one! Many thanks to all the functional units for pulling together as a team. In a very short period of time from when we first started this concept, we have fully implemented and fully integrated project management in the way we do business. The implementation of project management into Caltrans was begun several years ago when I worked in District 8. During that time Cindy Quon, current District 12 Director and former District 7 Division Chief of Program and Project Management, came to the District to see how we were developing project management. Cindy was instrumental in the original project delivery team approach for District 7 and she helped put it in motion quickly, considering the size of District 7. We are very fortunate that Raja Mitwasi subsequently took over, and with his dedicated staff and great ideas brought more strength to the organization. I want to thank Raja, his staff, the functional managers and all the teams who have brought project management to the highest level ever achieved in District 7. I know that everyone involved in project delivery wants to be number one again next year and am confident that together we will make that happen!

After the Project Delivery Celebration, our annual Quality Celebration was held. We were happy to have our guests from Sacramento join the celebration. My sincere appreciation to Godsen Okereke, Quality Coordinator, for his efforts to the Quality Program; and to all Quality team members for their ongoing efforts to the Quality in Caltrans program. You are all doing a terrific job!

I was privileged to represent District 7 at an awards ceremony recently at the Millennium Biltmore Hotel hosted by the Asian American Architects and Engineers (AAA/E) where District 7 was recognized as a leader in transportation in the Los Angeles area. It is a beautiful award and we are honored to have

received it. Many thanks to the AAA/E for the honor which is a reflection on every employee here at District 7 for the outstanding work done by all. In addition, I would like to thank the following for the additional certificates of recognition: California State Assemblymember Carol Liu; the Honorable John Chiang, member of the State Board of Equalization; and the County of Los Angeles Board of Supervisors who presented Caltrans with a beautiful plaque.

This year at the Los Angeles County Fair, I visited the Caltrans exhibit again. Each year the Caltrans display gets better and better. We receive more visitors and more positive comments each year. It is well worth the effort that our crews put forth in setting up and staffing the exhibit. Members from Safety and Maintenance were very upbeat and positive about what Caltrans does and enthusiastic about speaking with the public and answering their questions. There were photos of our Maintenance and Operations Divisions and it was a very impressive booth. Thanks to all who participated in this worthwhile presentation. I encourage everyone to visit the fair next year. And to make your commute to the fair an easy one, check your local bus or Metrolink schedule and share the ride! I hope to see you next year at the Los Angeles County Fair!

By the printing of this newsletter, many of you will have relocated to an off-site facility. In addition to the recent move to 1000 Wilshire Boulevard, others have relocated to 801 South Grand. Many who I have spoken to are quite happy with their new, temporary surroundings. These relocations are one step closer to our new building. Also by the time you read this column, we will be selecting a world-class architect among three finalists. Regardless of which one is chosen, it will be a great team and we should be breaking ground soon after the first of the year.

I would like to express my appreciation to all of you for your patience in relocating and for enduring the construction activities at the District Office Building. Work here should be wrapping up soon and the dust settling. And again my very sincere thanks to all for your continued hard work in making District 7 number one! •

**ROBERT W. SASSAMAN**  
District Director



Project Manager Tony Velazquez (holding cake, left) joins colleagues from Division of Design, Branch C, in celebration of the largest project in Ventura County this year.

## Division Of Design Celebrates A Job Well Done!

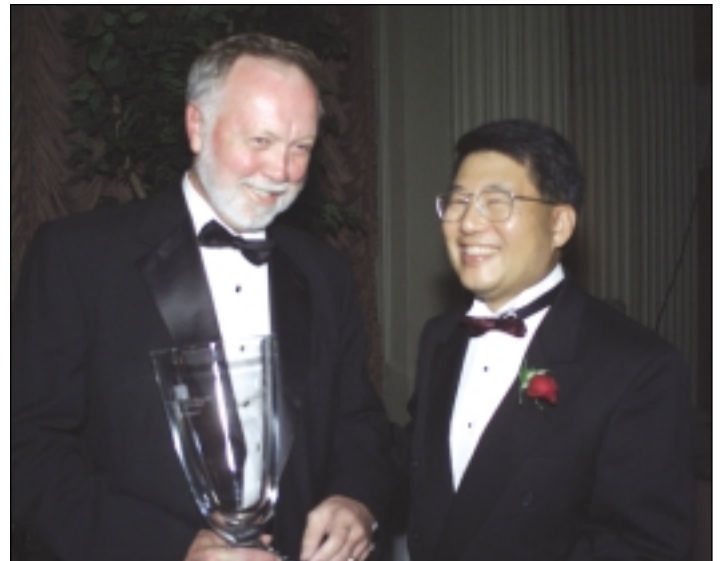
The Division of Design, Branch C, recently celebrated a job well done when their work completed on a major improvement project in the city of Camarillo in Ventura County. The project involved modifying the existing interchange on Highway 101 at Lewis Road (Route 34) by upgrading the on- and off-ramps at Daily Drive and at Ventura Boulevard, by widening the mainline freeway by one mix-flow lane in each direction and by reconstructing a new overcrossing at Arniel Road.

"The beautiful new overcrossing at Arniel Road will be a trophy on Highway 101," said Tony Velazquez, Project Manager. He also said that this project is very important to the county of Ventura because it is interdependent with other improvement projects located in the immediate vicinity, that when combined will greatly enhance the region. These projects include the widening of Lewis Road (Route 34) from the new interchange to the new California State University at Channel Islands in Camarillo; the new Metrolink station which includes a new parking facility under the freeway; and the "Old Town" improvements the City of Camarillo is undertaking at Ventura Boulevard.

Velazquez said the cost of the project is estimated at \$20 million and its design was completed earlier this summer. Construction is expected to begin in April 2002 with a completion date slated for April 2004. It is the largest Caltrans highway project in Ventura County this year. According to Velazquez, success is due to the cooperation between Caltrans and its partnering agencies. "I would like to thank the Ventura County Transportation Commission, the city of Camarillo, Senator Jack O'Connell and his aide Cindy Cunningham for their teamwork," he said.

Velazquez also expressed his sincere appreciation to the entire Design staff — in particular Terry Hsieh, Senior Design Engineer (now retired); Charles Ton, Project Engineer; Shan Chen, Project Engineer; Dan Dunn, Senior Right of Way Coordinator; Dan Murdock, Senior Right of Way Coordinator and the entire Project Development team. Hsieh was to have retired six months earlier, but stayed on through a critical time for the project in order to see it to completion.

Congratulations to the Division of Design, Branch C, and to all involved in this Ventura County improvement project for another Design job well done! •



Robert W. Sassaman, left, accepts award from Asian American Architects/Engineers on behalf of District 7, presented by Paul Mak, Associate Vice President, DMJM Harris.

## Caltrans District 7 Receives Award From Asian American Architects/Engineers

By Patricia Reid

Caltrans District 7 was honored by the Asian American Architects/Engineers Association during their annual award banquet held October 4 at the Millennium Biltmore Hotel in Downtown Los Angeles. Robert W. Sassaman, District Director, accepted the award on behalf of District 7. The banquet theme was "Transportation – Bridging the World." Los Angeles County Supervisor Don Knabe was Master of Ceremonies and Los Angeles City Council President Alex Padilla was the keynote speaker.

The association presented Sassaman with a beautifully engraved, crystal vase. The banquet theme was selected to recognize individuals and agencies that have impacted the transportation industry in Southern California. The five award recipients are leaders of various transportation agencies, whose policies and actions have contributed to forming the direction in which the greater Los Angeles community will proceed.

Other honorees included Don Knabe, Board Member, Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority (LACMTA); Los Angeles World Airports, accepted by Lydia Kennard, Executive Director; Dr. John Kashiwabara, President, Long Beach Board of Harbor Commissioners; and Orange County Transportation Authority (OCTA), accepted by Dinah Minter.

"Thank you very much for this prestigious award and for choosing to honor the California Department of Transportation for its commitment to improving transportation in California," Sassaman said. "In light of the current situation, I find tonight's theme of transportation as a bridge to the world particularly relevant. We have long been a leader in the diversity of our workforce." He also said, "As we build actual bridges, we are also building bridges between the public and private sectors and the

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Left to right: Caltrans' Kinikki Gordon, Equipment Operator from Maintenance South Region and Jack Denniston, Plumber Supervisor from Maintenance North Region, clown around while receiving the Green Ribbon on behalf of all staff involved with the Caltrans display at the Los Angeles County Fair.

## Fair Visitors "Brake" For Caltrans Workers

By Judy Gish

An estimated 20,000 visitors to the recent Los Angeles County Fair stopped by the California Department of Transportation booth to learn about life in the fast lane from those who work there – the Caltrans road crews.

"The exhibit's primary emphasis was to make the public aware of our highway workers," said District 7 Safety Officer Alan Calver. "We wanted to humanize our people and show that we are more than trucks and machinery."

The exhibit, which won a ribbon this year, emphasized the Maintenance Division, with approximately 60 workers from that division providing exclusive staffing at the fair. Each of the five maintenance regions was highlighted with a display of pictures. "Because the staffers included many field workers, they were able to vividly convey the experience of working along the side of the freeway," Calver said. By giving the workers a face, it is hoped that motorists will "give them a brake" and drive more carefully.

Visitors to the booth were very appreciative of the work Caltrans does, he added, and that encouragement is vital. "A lot of times crews out there on the hot, sweaty days and the cold days feel like the bottom of the rung and they need to hear positive things," said Calver.

The Los Angeles County Fair took place from September 7 through September 23. In addition to the Maintenance display, staffers also handed out information on the Foothill Freeway (I-210) extension and storm water run-off. This was the fifth year Caltrans participated. •

## Rideshare Fair A Success!

Hundreds of employees participated in the annual District 7 Rideshare Fair held on October 4. According to Rideshare Coordinator, James DeCastro, Caltrans has had excellent results in ridesharing and utilizing alternate forms of transportation. "Our District has been very successful in our rideshare efforts, including utilizing the Metrolink, vanpools, carpools and buses," he said. "And we thank all employees for sharing the ride!"

As a leader in transportation, Caltrans encourages all employees to share the ride to and from work. Robert W. Sassaman, District Director, suggests that each employee try an alternate mode of transportation one day a week for a month. "It makes your day a lot easier," he said. "And it helps Caltrans to be a leader in ridesharing, helping to make the commute better for everyone. Sharing the commute makes our own trip easier, and for those around us as well."

Sassaman went on to say that as far as he could remember, Caltrans has led the area in ridesharing. He congratulated the District for achieving such great results in Los Angeles and hopes that every employee will try to reap the benefits of using different modes of transportation; not just for the economy of it, but the convenience as well. Commuting on a train or bus allows for reading and relaxation, Sassaman noted. "And ridesharing can also save time and money."

Over the years, commuters who have tried ridesharing have seen its advantages firsthand. "As one who has tried almost every type of transportation myself, I can attest to the benefits," Sassaman said. "One Caltrans employee even bicycles from Sylmar every day. We all need to look at reasons to rideshare, not excuses not to. Congratulations to all who are sharing the ride!"

Whether utilizing Caltrans van pools, buses, rail, carpooling or any other alternate mode of transportation, try ridesharing. It works!

For additional information, please contact James DeCastro at (213) 897-0491. •



James DeCastro, center, and colleagues celebrate another successful Rideshare Fair.

## Caltrans Remembers Robert Strople

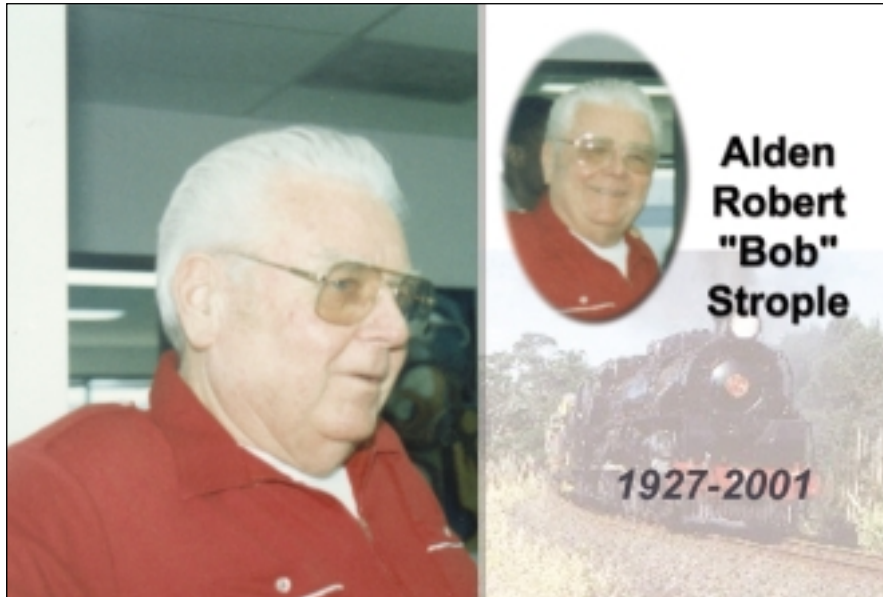
Alden Robert "Bob" Strople passed away in September after a courageous battle with cancer. He spent 40 years with Caltrans in Surveys and Construction and touched many lives. He generously gave his tremendous friendship and shared his sense of humor, knowledge and his values with those he came in contact with. Strople retired in 1990 and returned as an annuitant, contributing greatly to the Construction Division. Long after his retirement and into his illness, he continued to care deeply about Caltrans. He was known to send comic strips to individuals in Caltrans offices in order that they might keep work and life in perspective. These comics arrived packaged in envelopes decorated with silly stickers or drawings, equally as funny as the comics which they contained. They made everyone in the office laugh, even the people who didn't know him. Throughout

his illness, he never lost his sense of humor, his caring for others and most of all, his faith. His loving wife of 51 years, his wonderful family and his strong faith gave him great comfort throughout his illness. The following are some reflections from friends:

From Robert C. Klesges, P.E.: "Of all the things that could be said of Bob, the most common thing was that he was fun to work with. His job integrity could be matched only by his personal integrity in all things. Our first major assignment together was construction of the Colorado Street Bridge over the Arroyo Seco in Pasadena. Bob was quick to help develop the special techniques that were required. He championed the use of the California Coordinate Control System use in construction surveys. A lot of us learned "how to" from his expert and unfailing examples. He knew how to get the most and the best from everyone who touched him." From Mike Perovich: "When I went to work at the change order desk, it became apparent that the golden nucleus of field construction was the offices of Bob Joe, Gary Ethier and Jim Renshaw. As great as these three were, it wasn't long before I recognized the common denominator among them was Bob Strople. 'Mr. Strople, sir' as I always called him, was the penultimate office person and there is no one more valuable in construction than a good office person. The change order desk was bombarded with change orders that seemed more like cipher puzzles than contract documents, but not if Mr. Strople was in any way connected with them. His were perfection. Here was someone who actually knew what he was doing. Bob Strople and people like him are the very core of Caltrans and should be appreciated for the treasures that they are." From

Christina Ruano: "Bob was a generous man...generous with his talent as well as his sense of humor. He was always willing to pitch in and help when there was a need. He was a friend and will be missed." From Jerry Seibler: "We were working on the Rincon. It was Christmas Eve, 1970. It had rained hard all day and the trucks were hauling rip-rap from Riverside. There were 25 trucks on the road and it took hours for them to get to the

Rincon. We were in mud up to our waists. Each load of 10-ton rock had to be drug out to the surf by a dozer. Everyone but Bob and I had long gone home. Soon it got dark and we still had many trucks on the road. Together we agreed that no one should have to spend Christmas Eve in the dark, wet, hungry and out of coffee. Around 9:00 p.m. I went to the firehouse nearby and bummed a thermos of coffee and some cookies. As we sat in Bob's



truck celebrating Christmas Eve together, with semi-warm coffee and stale cookies, Bob turned and said to me "This is the worst Christmas Eve I have spent since the war. And the worst part about it is that someday we will look back on tonight and call this 'the good old days.' Was he ever right!" From Irv Borow: "He rode the rails just for fun. He did not think there was any good use for airplanes. He knew all the good and useful things there were to know. He was thrilled to be able to share and teach what he knew. He had friends numbering in the hundreds. He will be missed." From Robert Noll: Bob Noll remembers Strople as being a pioneer in using computer calculations for surveying in the 1960s. He recollects him being in charge of a multi-million-dollar project on the Rincon and catching a contractor falsifying tickets, which resulted in convictions and fines. He did not tolerate dishonesty. He was a man of honor and expected the same from others. He remembers Bob's humorous side. Noll and Strople were very good friends. Whenever they got together everyone else in the room could not help but be affected by the humor and the reminiscing of their shared fond memories about Caltrans. From Maria Martinez: "He will always be Mr. Strople to me because he was so full of knowledge and wisdom that he needed to be respected. I was lucky enough to be taken under his wing, like a father does with his children, and, like a child, I learned so much from him. Two of his "Stropleisms" that I will never forget: (1) teach everyone around you all YOU know so they can run the job without you. (2) If they are paying you for 8 hours, give them 8 hours. I will miss him





## 2001 Quality Celebration

By Godson Okereke, Senior Transportation Engineer, Division of Maintenance and District Quality Coordinator

The 2001 Quality Celebration was held on Wednesday, October 3 at the Ronald Reagan State Office Building. The occasion was very well attended. Present at the ceremony were Caltrans Director Jeff Morales, District 7 Director Robert W. Sassaman and a host of Deputy Directors.

The Quality Celebration began immediately after the District Project Delivery celebration hosted by Raja Mitwasi, District 7 Deputy Director, Division of Program/Project Management. Seven Quality teams participated in the ceremony. The teams consisted of:

### **Traffic Congestion Improvement Team – Construction**

Team members: Peter Chan, Alvaro Carranza, Ali Bamshad, Sam Esquenazi, Albert Yu, Ossama Assaad, Yousseff Youseffzadeh, Mike Lopez, David Lau, Milton Kizer, Joe Venegas, Marilyn Cameron and Joy Pinne.

### **Maintenance Equipment Training Center Team**

Team members: Michael Miles, Tom Almany III, Richard Gordon, Herby Lissade, Nate Cradle, Chuck Webster, Larry Ornay, Richard Sanborn, Roy Pool, Alex Cajina, Pam Dennis, Charles McDowell, Dave Chapman, Susan Baca, Steve Wagner, Marvin Pruitt, Donald Sizemore, Jose Barbosa, Jim Edson, John Cottier, Bruce Flaws, Godson Okereke, Shawn Silva and Brian Valenti.

### **Electrical Energy Conservation Team**

Team members: Bob Dennis, Leonard Thompson, Cheryl Kizer, Mel Nagado, Martha Hetzler, Dina El-Tawansy, Norman Juarez, Jorge Fuentes, Bill Maher, Tommy Faubush, Chuck Bruley, Joe Gill, Duncan McIntosh, James De Castro and Sim Green.



Jeff Morales, left, presents Godson Okereke with a District 7 Quality Recognition Award.

### **Maintenance Agreement Database Project Team**

Team members: Michael Miles, Tom Almany III, Chuck O'Connell, Harold Madison, Rachel Partida, Monica Moreno, Richard Hung, Herby Lissade, Godson Okereke and Tom Luong.

### **Strategic Plan Monitoring Team**

Team members: Robert W. Sassaman, Duncan McIntosh, Godson Okereke, Junious Pierson, Gabriela Venegas, Rita Branch, Cheryl Powell, Ghassan Dagher, Richard A. Stewart, Jorge Carbrera, John Ruff, Richard Hung, Hung Tran, Marc Wong and Elhami Nasr.

### **Sign Installation Order Database Team**

Team members: Lewis Yee, Tom Luong, Luu Nguyen, Mario Dimen, Louise Kaainoa, Sandra Segura and U.T. Lien.

### **Program and Project Management Team**

Team members: Raja Mitwasi, Mumbie Fredson Cole, Eric Wang, Tony Velasquez, Namrata Sen, John Scott, Jay Shah, Adel Giris and John Vassiliades.

The Strategic Objective Monitoring Team, led by Duncan McIntosh, Chief, Graphic Services and the Maintenance Equipment Training Center Team, led by Richard Gordon, Stormwater Coordinator, both gave Powerpoint presentations. The rest of the teams had very

informative displays placed at the entrance of the auditorium.

Two sets of awards were presented. The Caltrans Statewide Quality Awards were given to members of three District 7 Quality Teams. The winning teams and the awards categories were:

- Maintenance Equipment Training Center Team – Pathfinder
- Maintenance Agreement Database Project Team – Explorer
- Sign Installation Order Database Team– Nominee

The District 7 Quality Recognition Awards were given to the following teams:

- Energy Conservation Team
- Traffic Congestion Improvement Team/Construction
- Strategic Objectives Monitoring Team

Throughout the year, the District 7 Quality Program has been on track establishing new Quality Teams and revitalizing some existing ones. Quality training classes were conducted to improve team member participation and the understanding of Quality in Caltrans. The "Kick-Starting High Performance Quality Teams" class was very informative. Contacts were maintained with the Headquarters Quality Coordinators. The Headquarters program has approved two more classes for District 7 this fiscal year. They are "Customer-Driven Quality" and "Using Quality Tools." The Headquarters Quality Program has always been and continues to be supportive of the District's Quality efforts.

The District 7 Quality Steering Committee, which serves as the Quality Advisory Council, has also been very supportive of the program. The committee consists of the District Director, Deputy District Directors and the Quality Coordinators. They provide the needed management support and promote Quality activities. Their members encourage the various teamwork, act as sponsors by initiating team projects and its mission and write the Team Charter. The District sponsors, team leaders and Division Coordinators have been very cooperative. The current relocations within and outside the District office posed some challenges; however, the teams worked through them.



## Project Delivery

*continued from page 1*

for bigger and better things from District 7 in the coming year. He asked the audience to take a moment to appreciate their accomplishments and congratulate each other for their major achievements. Well done, District 7 — the number one, statewide leader in project delivery! •

*Raja Mitwasi addresses the audience at the Project Delivery Celebration.*

## Strople

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dearly." From Mary Asmus: "By chance meeting early in my Caltrans career, I met Bob Strople and little did I know my life would be changed for good. He was the influence that resulted in my transfer into the Construction Division and he was a major influence in my life. He taught me so many things just by being all that he was. He was brilliant yet he was silly. He was serious but always playful and laughing. He found just enough humor in things to keep them in their proper perspective. He taught me about construction and about friendship. He cared so much about his friends and family. His love was unconditional. He was very wise, yet, from this silver-haired gentleman, I learned to think like a kid again. There will never be anyone like Bob Strople and I am sure he has a special assignment in Heaven." Richard Paul summed up everyone's sentiments perfectly... "Bob Strople — always friendly, always kind, always helpful, always knowledgeable, always learning, always teaching. To those of us lucky enough to have known him, always remembered."

Memorial contributions may be made in Bob's memory to the American Cancer Society for Cancer Research, 3737 Telegraph Road, Suite D, Ventura, CA 93003. •

## Quality

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There are currently seven very active Quality Teams in the District. There are some 18 other teams that are either winding down or have completed their tasks, but have yet to formally close out the team. A need currently exists to recruit more team facilitators from within the District. One of the functions of the Division Coordinators is to act as their Division's team facilitator.

The Quality web page is constantly being improved upon and more information is being made available. An offset from the team charter site will be added for current status updates. Upper management and sponsors may view this site to see what the teams are accomplishing and what stage they are in as they pursue project milestones.

As it has been said, "Quality is a never-ending road." Therefore, Caltrans will continue to improve its Quality Program. Special thanks to all who have contributed in one way or another to this important effort. •



Mr. Nate Cradle,  
South Region Maintenance Manager

Dear Mr. Cradle:

Our Office hosted a child safety seat checkup recently at the Toys R Us store in Los Angeles. Mr. Glenn Mellinger of your staff so graciously provided us with Mr. Doug Asher and a truck from the Alameda yard to haul our required equipment for this event. Doug assisted Officer Scott Ellison on Friday, the day before the event, picking up tables, chairs, child seats, youth bicycle helmets and canopies. On Saturday morning, Doug met Officer Ellison at the checkup location at 7 a.m. to drop off the supplies and equipment. He then returned later that afternoon to reload the truck. He not only dropped off and picked up the equipment on Saturday, Doug helped set up nine canopies and then broke them down later that day. He then delivered half of the supplies to the Central Los Angeles office and the remaining went to Exposition Park the following Monday. Doug arrived at the Central Los Angeles office and at the event location exactly when he said he would be there on Friday and Saturday (actually earlier). His attitude remained positive both days despite the heat — and he is a very hard worker. The two-ton truck was fully loaded and unloaded two times! It was a real pleasure for Officer Ellison to work with Doug and we appreciate his strong work ethic. He represented Caltrans very well!

Sincerely,  
C. S. Klein, Captain,  
Commander, California Highway Patrol  
Central Los Angeles Area

## Asian American Award

*continued from page 3*

various communities in our state."

The Asian American Architects/Engineers Association has been a leader of the Asian American community for the past two decades. Each year the organization solicits six scholarship sponsors from established business and community leaders. Outstanding undergraduate students who are studying engineering and architecture at local universities are given academic scholarships at the banquet. •

## What's **Cookin' At Caltrans**

### GLAZED SWEET POTATO AND APPLE CASSEROLE

From [www.foodtv.com](http://www.foodtv.com)

- 4 medium sweet potatoes (yams)
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- 5 tablespoons butter
- 1/3 cup molasses
- 2 teaspoons lemon juice
- 1/4 cup chopped pecans
- 2 large apples (preferably Macintosh)
- 1/4 cup brown sugar



Preheat oven to 325°. Boil potatoes until tender but still firm; cool. Peel, slice and place in baking pan. Core/slice apples; sprinkle with salt and lemon juice. In skillet, bring butter to slow sizzle; toss apples in pan until slightly soft. Arrange apples with potatoes. Add molasses to butter remaining in pan and bring to boil. Pour over apples/potatoes coating well. Sprinkle sugar and pecans on top. Bake 30 minutes until brown/bubbly.

### HOLIDAY APPLE CRANBERRY PIE

From [www.reddiwip.com](http://www.reddiwip.com)

- 1 15-oz. pkg. of 2 Pillsbury refrigerated pie crusts
- 1/4 cup flour
- 5 cups thinly sliced and peeled apples
- 3/4 teaspoon cinnamon
- 1-1/2 cups fresh or frozen (and thawed) cranberries
- 1/4 teaspoon salt
- 1 cup sugar
- 1/8 teaspoon nutmeg
- 1 teaspoon lemon juice
- Reddi-wip whipped cream

Prepare crusts according to package for a 2-crust pie. Heat oven to 425°. Combine remaining ingredients except for whipped cream. Spoon into pie crust-lined pan. Top with remaining crust, folding edges under and press together. Cut slits in top crust. Bake at 425° for 45-55 minutes until apples are tender and crust golden. (Cover edge of crust after 15 minutes with foil to prevent excessive browning). Top with whipped cream before serving.

Please email recipes you would like to share to the editor at [jeanne.bonfilio@dot.ca.gov](mailto:jeanne.bonfilio@dot.ca.gov).



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